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CITY OF EL CENTRO ALLEY STUDY

A Report Presented to

The El Centro Planning Commission

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AUG 17 1976

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Prepared by

City of El Centro, Planning Department

Oliver M. Alvarado

Planning Director

1976

(El Centro, Planning Commission)
Streets El Centro
Subdivisions " "

Typed by: Rachel Powers

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The City of El Centro is located in Imperial County, one of the most highly developed agricultural regions in the United States. The city is the largest in Imperial County, and since it is the county seat and a principal service-retail center for the agri-business economic base of the county, its position as the largest urban community in the county can be projected to continue.

According to the 1970 census, the population of El Centro was 19,272. A special census was conducted in 1973 setting the population at 21,134. This reflects an average yearly population increase of approximately 3%. As the population grows, so does the need for housing. To accomodate the increasing demand for housing, new subdivisions must be developed and designed in a manner which best meets the needs of the community.

Purpose of the Study

It was the purpose of the study to research all aspects concerning the need for alleys in new subdivisions within the City of El Centro. The city's present ordinance requires the incorporation of alleys in all new residential subdivisions. In recent years this requirement has been subject to question as to its real value.

Objectives of the Study

More specifically, the objectives of the study were:

1. To identify the number of residential subdivisions with and without alleys within the city.

INTRODUCTION

The City of St. Louis is located in Eastern Missouri, one of the most highly developed agricultural regions in the United States. The city is the largest in Eastern Missouri, and ranks 11 in the country and a national agricultural center for the mid-Southwestern section of the country. Its location in the largest river community in the country has been projected to continue.

According to the 1970 census, the population of St. Louis was 513,174.

A special census was conducted in 1971 which gave a population of 513,174.

This census was taken to determine the number of persons living in the

in the metropolitan area, as well as the total for Missouri. It was found that

the metropolitan area of St. Louis, the metropolitan area of St. Louis and the

in a census which gave the number of the population.

History of the City

It was the purpose of the study to research all aspects concerning the history of the city to see whether or not the City of St. Louis is the city's greatest contribution to the development of the city. It is all the contribution of the city to the development of the city. It is all the contribution of the city to the development of the city. It is all the contribution of the city to the development of the city.

Development of the City

The development of the city is the result of the city's growth. The city's growth is the result of the city's growth. The city's growth is the result of the city's growth. The city's growth is the result of the city's growth. The city's growth is the result of the city's growth.

2. To identify value of alleys through citizen input.
3. To identify what other cities are doing in this regard.
4. To identify what effect alleys have on various public agencies.
5. To research studies relevant to alleys.
6. To formulate some recommendations for future residential subdivisions.

Scope of Study

The study was limited to the El Centro Community. Thus, the findings are applicable only to this population. Furthermore, the study was limited to interviewing a sample of 240 residents during the spring of 1976 as well as contacting agencies and cities during this period.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

In Chapter 1, a general overview to the study was presented. Chapter 2 presents a review of related theoretical literature. Chapter 3, concerns itself with the methods and procedures of the study. The findings of the study are reported in Chapter 4. Chapter 5, includes a summary of the findings and recommendations.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In reviewing related literature concerning alleys, the International City Managers Association handbook on Local Planning Administration provides the following recommendations and observations:

"In general, alleys should be prohibited in residential subdivisions except in the rear of lots that front on major streets, where local deliveries and garage access away from major traffic. Alleys are also necessary to furnish access to rear yard garages on very steep lots or behind lots intended for group houses. Wherever provided in residential districts, alleys should be at least 20 feet in width with 16 foot pavements, paved alleys 20 feet wide should be provided in the rear of lots zoned and platted for business use, unless these lots are served by other off-street loading space (as determined by zoning regulations)."

The International City Managers Association handbook, Principles and Practice of Urban Planning, reiterates the aforementioned recommendations:

"Alleys are normally avoided in residential subdivisions, except in certain unusual situations, but required in commercial or industrial development. In the latter case they must normally be 20 feet wide and so designed as to facilitate in-and-out movement of the rather large goods-delivering vans which may use them."

Literature regarding studies conducted on alleys was requested from the League of California Cities but none was available. Thus, the review of related literature was limited to the above mentioned handbooks. A copy of the League's response is attached in the appendix for your information (exhibit "A").

DIVISION OF THE ARMY ENGINEER

In accordance with the provisions of the Act of March 3, 1909, the following

City Engineer is hereby authorized to prepare and submit to the

the following recommendations and plans:

The first, after the completion of the preliminary plan, is to prepare a plan of the proposed work, showing the location of the work, the nature of the work, and the estimated cost of the work. This plan should be submitted to the City Engineer for his approval. The second, after the approval of the preliminary plan, is to prepare a plan of the proposed work, showing the location of the work, the nature of the work, and the estimated cost of the work. This plan should be submitted to the City Engineer for his approval. The third, after the approval of the preliminary plan, is to prepare a plan of the proposed work, showing the location of the work, the nature of the work, and the estimated cost of the work. This plan should be submitted to the City Engineer for his approval.

The following are the recommendations and plans submitted by the

Engineer of the City Engineer, and the estimated cost of the work:

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The following are the recommendations and plans submitted by the

Engineer of the City Engineer, and the estimated cost of the work:

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Engineer of the City Engineer, and the estimated cost of the work:

Chapter 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The study dealt with researching all aspects concerning alleys in residential subdivisions. The research method utilized included the survey approach, contacting various cities and agencies for input, analyzing the existing subdivisions and reviewing related literature.

Research Method

The survey approach was utilized as the research method for gaining citizen input on attitudes towards alleys. Interviews were conducted using a questionnaire which was available both in Spanish and English. The choice of questionnaire was left to the discretion of the interviewee.

All interviews were conducted during the hours of 8:A.M. to 5:P.M. during the month of March. A random sampling of 240 single family residences were surveyed. This constituted approximately 5% of the overall total single family residences in the city. Of the 240 residents sampled, half were selected from areas with alley and the other half without alleys. This is to say that 120 residents sampled lived with an alley in their subdivision and the remaining 120 did not have alleys.

The questionnaire was administered verbally to each member of the samples. Questionnaire items dealt with length of time residents have lived in the community, general feelings about alleys and whether or not alleys would be an important item of concern when considering the purchase of a new home. A copy of the full questionnaire is provided in the appendix as exhibit B-1, and B-2. Both Spanish and English versions are illustrated in the appendix. As stated previously, choice of the questionnaire was left to the discretion of the interviewee.

The research method also included contacting various cities within the State relative to our size, geography and economy. The purpose was to investigate what other cities were doing in regards to alleys in residential subdivisions. A letter was sent to 20 cities which included: Barstow, Brawley, Calexico, Chico, Chino, Delano, Gilroy, Hanford, Indio, Madera, Merced, Norco, Oildale, Palm Springs, Porterville, Roseville, Tulare, Turlock, Watsonville and Yuba City. The letter sent is attached as exhibit "C" in the appendix.

Responses were received from nine of the 20 cities contacted and this information is discussed in chapter four.

Also contacted were various agencies who are normally contacted for comment, regarding environmental impact reports. This letter is attached in the appendix as exhibit "D". The list of those agencies contacted is also attached in the appendix as exhibit "E" and included agencies such as: Department of Transportation, County Planning Commission, County Health Department, Imperial Irrigation District, Superintendent of schools, El Centro Community Hospital, Pacific Telephone Co., I.V. Cable Co., Post Office, Southern Calif. Gas Co., Water Quality Control Board, State Housing Division, City Public Works Department, Fire Department, Police Department, and the El Centro Sanitation Department.

Eleven agencies responded to the letters. Findings of the responses are presented in Chapter 4.

The last method utilized was the examination and comparisons of existing single family residential areas and as previously discussed in Chapter 2, literature related to this subject was also analyzed. Chapter 4 contains the presentation and analysis of the findings.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

The methods and procedures utilized in obtaining information for the alley study were briefly outlined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 is devoted to presenting data and information derived from the residential survey, response from cities and agencies as well as the examination of existing single family residential subdivisions.

Existing Subdivisions

The City of El Centro has currently 4,900 single family residential units. Of this total, 1,615 units are established in areas without alleys. This represents approximately 33% of the total single family units. The remaining 67% of the units contain alleys in their subdivision. Residential development in the past 20 years has reflected a pattern of subdivision design which does not include alleys. These relatively newer subdivisions are located to the south, southwest and to an extent, the northern portions of the city. Map of areas with no dedicated alleys are illustrated in appendix as exhibit "F". This pattern has been contrary to traditional alley-designed subdivisions which were predominant during the initial growth years of the city. Accessibility to rear yards was perhaps the principal motive for their creation.

According to the Public Works Department there are 13.91 miles of unpaved alleys and six miles of paved alleys within the city. A total cost of approximately \$13,000.00 per year is spent in maintaining the alleys.

Alley Attitudinal Survey

An alley attitudinal survey was conducted to obtain citizen input regarding alleys. As stated previously, 240 single family residents were randomly sampled for their opinions on alleys. Half of this total, (120) were residents with alleys and the remaining 120 did not have alleys in their subdivisions. Thus, an equal amount of residents were surveyed with and without alley.

Residents with Alleys

The residents who were surveyed with alleys in their subdivisions usually conveyed two reasons for preferring alleys. This included, accessibility to the rear yard and preference for trash pickup in the alley. The sample had lived in El Centro a median number of 20 years. Regarding their feelings about alleys, 101 (84%) indicated that alleys were beneficial to the homeowner, ten (8%) thought alleys were detrimental to the homeowner and nine (8%) had no opinion.

In responding to the question, "If you were to buy a new house, would you buy one that included alleys in the subdivision?" 102(85%) indicated that they would prefer a home with an alley while 18 (15%) would not want an alley if they were to buy a new house. As stated previously, the majority of the respondents stated accessibility to back yard, and preference for trash cans in alley as the primary reasons for their answers to this question. The 15% that stated they would not buy a house with an alley, said that alleys were too messy.

Residents Without Alleys

The residents surveyed without alleys had lived a median number of 15 years in El Centro. Thus, these residents had not lived in El Centro as long as the residents who have alleys in their subdivision. In describing their feeling about alleys, 59 or 49% thought alleys were beneficial to the homeowner. Those residents who felt alleys were detrimental to the homeowner, totaled 42 or 35% of the respondents while 19 or 16% of the total had no opinion.

In regarding the purchase of a new home which included alleys, 64 or 53% of the respondents preferred a new home with an alley. Fifteen or 43%, said that they would not purchase a house with an alley and four residents refused to comment.

Again as in the first sample, the primary reasons given for preference of alleys was accessibility to rear yards and convenience for trash pick ups. Those who did not like alleys thought they were too messy and felt subdivisions without alleys provided more security and safety.

Response From Cities

As indicated previously, 20 cities were contacted for information to see if they required alleys in their subdivision. Nine of the cities contacted responded to the inquiry. Responses from these cities are attached in the appendix under "Responses From Cities". Seven of the cities are listed because two of the cities (Brawley & Calexico) responded by telephone.

Of the nine cities that responded, six stated that alleys were not required in single family residential units. The main reasons given were maintenance costs and security factors.

Three of the cities indicated that alleys were required in single family residential districts. One of the three, (Delano) indicated that because of the increasing cost of housing construction, this policy was being reevaluated. The other two cities (Brawley, Calexico) requires alleys but Planning Commission has authority to waive this requirement if found to be necessary.

Response From Agencies

Agencies that were contacted in regards to the subject matter, were listed in Chapter 3. Eleven responses were received from a total of 16 agencies contacted. Again, the primary purpose in contacting these agencies was to gain a perspective from the various agencies on what possible impact and effect the elimination of alleys in all new single family subdivision would have on them. The response are attached in the appendix under "Response from Agencies".

The eleven agencies that responded to the inquiry included: Department of Transportation, Superintendent of Schools, Hospital Administrator, Pacific Telephone Company, Imperial Valley Cable Company, Southern California Gas Company, Public Works Department, Fire Department, Police Department, and El Centro Sanitation Company.

Of the eleven respondents, four stated that the elimination of alleys would have no effect upon their agency. More specifically, these agencies were, Hospital Administrator, Superintendent of Schools, Water Quality Control Board and Department of Transportation.

Four of the eleven respondents stated a preference for alleys and included: Police Department, Fire Department, I.V. Cable Company, El Centro Sanitation Co.

The Police Department comments are attached in the appendix. Overall security and safety reasons are outlined in their report.

The Fire Department also stresses the need for alleys because of safety reasons. Furthermore, it is believed that the elimination of alleys will hinder accessibility to the rear of the property.

The I.V. Cable Company states that the elimination of alleys would have a severe impact on both the financial aspect of installing cable television and maintaining the plant in the future. Inconvenience to the property owners was another reason for preferring alleys.

Because of the nature of their work, the Sanitation Company was also asked for input. Those who were asked to respond were the workers who picked up the trash in the residential units only. Because the workers worked different hours, it was difficult for them to all meet and comment as to their feelings about alleys, thus, a secret ballot was taken and five out of five workers preferred picking up trash in the alleys. We can assume that one reason for this was due to the fact that because alleys are only 20' wide and an average city street is 40' wide, the walking distance from trash can to truck is reduced considerably. Also, because there is very little traffic in the alley, the possibility of being hit by a car is not as great when compared to a street.

The Pacific Telephone Company also indicated concern over the elimination of alleys as indicated by the following excerpt: "The absence of an alley in a new tract will have a definite impact upon Pacific Telephone's design of distribution facilities and joint trench planning". If alleys are eliminated the telephone Company would prefer to locate in the street franchise area and avoid rear lot

easements whenever possible because of maintenance reasons and also the inconvenience to the property owner.

The Southern California Gas Company states that the alley is not the preferred location for gas facilities. Thus, the elimination of alleys would have no adverse effect on them.

The City's Public Works Department prefers not having alleys in residential areas primarily because of the high maintenance costs that they produce. This observation was quite similar to comments from the various cities that did not require alleys in residential subdivisions.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The City of El Centro's General Plan makes no mention of, and provides no policies for, the dedication and improvement of alleys in new residential subdivisions. The City's Zoning Ordinance defines "Alley" as: "Any dedicated way, intended for vehicular service to the rear or side of property served by a street." At the present time, the City has a provision for the requirement of alleys in all new residential subdivisions. The main purpose of the study was to gather data on all aspects of alleys to better determine whether the existing provision should be amended.

Summary of Findings

In briefly summarizing the findings concerning existing single family residential units, we find that, approximately 67% have alleys. This represents 2/3 of the overall units while 1/3 or 33% are without alleys. In examining preference by the local residents, it was found that of the 240 total residents surveyed, approximately 69% or 166 residents preferred to live where alleys were available. The primary reasons given were, accessibility to the rear yard and convenient refuse collection. Those who did not favor alleys thought they were too messy and unsafe.

The majority of the cities contacted did not require alleys in new subdivisions primarily because of economic reasons. Agencies also reflected a financial concern if alleys were to be eliminated. The majority of the agencies contacted were either desirous of alleys or felt they would not be adversely effected by their elimination.

Current planning publications do not encourage the incorporation of alleys in single family residential areas.

As a general rule, people who have alleys adjacent to their property like them. People who have to install, pay for and maintain alleys are against them. Some of the major arguments for and against alleys are listed below:

PROS

CONS

1. Fire Protection

Alleys offer easy access for fire trucks to the rear portions of lots. The alley acts as a firebreak between abutting rear properties.

Fire hydrants are normally placed along street frontages. It is often argued that adequate fire protection to the rear of the lot can be adequately achieved from the front of the residence.

2. Refuse Collection

Alleys provide efficient and convenient collection of refuse, with less energy and costs for crews and equipment. Alley collection enhances the street appearance of neighborhoods.

Alley collection areas are often unsightly and strewn with glass and litter because of the negligence of people or the rummaging of animals. People generally take more pride in the appearance of the front of their houses, than the rear.

3. Alley Installation and Maintenance

If alleys are constructed properly with paving to street standards and center "V" gutter for drainage, there should be less maintenance problems. Alleys don't get the constant heavy use by vehicles that streets have. Alleys can easily be patched by a small crew on a periodic basis.

The cost of constructing an alley is approximately equivalent to one-third the cost of constructing a residential street including curbs, gutter, and sidewalks. not only do alleys take away additional land which could be used as part of the building site, they are also expensive for the City to maintain. The City could be liable for any damage suit resulting from the disrepair of such a traffic way.

4. Storm Drainage

Properly graded lots and alleys with "V" gutters will route storm water to existing storm water drainage systems in the streets.

Alleys contribute significantly to storm water run-off. The pavement takes away a large yard area which could absorb storm water. Without the alleys, the storm water can be adequately routed along street gutters.

5. Dogs

When alleys are fenced along the rear lots, developers can install covered concrete pads refuse collection areas which are inaccessible to animals.

Much of the problem of unsightliness around refuse collection areas is contributed to dogs roaming the alleys in search of food. Animals often tip over trash cans and strew litter in the alleys and yards. Refuse containers are normally left on streets overnight only. When there is refuse collection from the alley, containers often remain outside on a permanent basis.

6. Underground Services

Alleys provide a convenient location for the placement of underground utilities, water and sewer lines. It eliminates tearing up streets when repair or maintenance work is being done.

Most residences are situated closer to the front on lots. It is therefore cheaper to connect laterals from the front of the house than from the rear because of the shorter distance involved.

7. Aesthetics

Alleys offer rear access for refuse collection and storage of vehicles, campers, boats and other equipment which are normally stored in front yards of houses without alleys.

The problem of storage vehicles, campers, boats, etc. in front yards can be alleviated by amending the zoning ordinance to require one 15 foot sideyard in new residential development lots.

8. Lot Utilization

Alleys allow for the placement of garages in the rear, instead of the front. This could reduce the need for large front yards in residential subdivisions considerably.

Many people use garages for storage of everything but cars. When garages and driveways are in the alley, people normally park in front of the house along the street, particularly if there is no rear driveway.

9. Vandalism

Boats, trailers and other large valuable items can be easily placed inside the rear yard areas from the alley for storage. Without access to the rear yard, these items are often stored in front yard areas for easy access to vandals or thieves, particularly in the evening hours or when property owners are away.

Alleys offer little protection from thieves or vandals entering through the rear yards particularly in the evening hours. Alleys normally are not systematically patrolled by the Police Department. Fences offer little protection against vandals or thieves.

Nearly every argument for alleys can be counter-argued by those against alleys, and vice versa. It is no doubt that alleys are expensive for the city to maintain. They also increase the costs to the developer for installation, costs which are normally passed on to the person buying the property. Alleys often afford many advantages including rear access for storage of personal items and refuse collection. Whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages is a policy matter to be decided by the City Council through a recommendation by the Planning Commission. In this regard the following recommendations are provided for commission consideration:

1. Commission can remain with present ordinance which require alleys in all new subdivisions. If this is the desire of the commission, then the ordinance must be consistently enforced.

2. If alleys are retained, consideration should be given in having the developers provide enclosures for trash and garbage pickup. Those should be located within each property line for easier maintenance by city crews. Also, alleys should be maintained on a regularly scheduled basis to prevent the accumulation of weeds and rubbish.
3. If alleys are eliminated then it is recommended that the zoning ordinance be amended to require one 15' side yard on each residential lot for accessibility to the rear yard.
4. The elimination of alleys will also require wider lots because of the larger side yard requirements. This can be obtained by amending the currently required dimensions of 60' x 120' to 70' x 105', which would maintain the 7,200 square feet minimum lot area.
5. Common rear yard fences should be required to discourage the construction of fences at the public utility easement line in the rear yard. This would eliminate a potential fire problem which could result when there is a large gap between rear yard fences because of the weeds and rubbish that accumulates there. This could also be avoided by locating utility lines in the street franchise area thereby eliminating the inconvenience to property owners when repair to lines are necessary.

It is hoped that the information provided in this study was of value and benefit to the commission in their assessment as to the value of alleys in single family residential developments. Another such study and survey should be conducted within a few years to measure any changes in attitudes towards alleys for better guidance. It is the commission, in their final determination, who has the responsibility of recommending to the City Council the best and highest land usage of residential development which they deem necessary for the general health, safety and welfare of the community.

APPENDIX



League of California Cities

Sacramento, California

March 10, 1976

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Lawrence Tollner

Council Member, Fremont

Richard Weaver

Director, Santa Clara County

Mr. Oliver Alvarado

City of El Centro

1275 Main Street

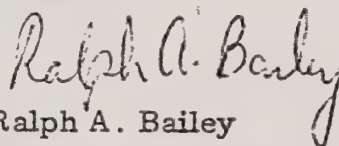
El Centro, CA 92243

Dear Mr. Alvarado:

The League's Los Angeles office has requested that we respond to your inquiry concerning alleys in subdivisions. After an extensive search of our reference library, I am sorry to inform you we have no materials on this subject.

If we can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Ralph A. Bailey
Research Assistant

RAB:ft

ALLEY ATTITUDINAL SURVEYMARCH 1976

ADDRESS _____

CENSUS TRACT _____

Hello, I'm _____ from the City of El Centro Planning Department. We are doing a survey to find out how people feel about alleys in residential areas.

INTERVIEWER: Indicate whether there is an alley in this subdivision.

YES _____ NO _____

1. How long have you lived in El Centro? _____
2. How long have you lived at your present residence? _____
3. Which best describes your feelings about alleys (circle one):
 - A. Alleys are beneficial to the homeowner
 - B. Alleys are detrimental to the homeowner
 - C. I have no opinion
4. If you were to buy a new house would you buy one that included alleys in the subdivision.

YES _____ NO _____

Please explain briefly: _____

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

EXHIBIT B-2
CIUDAD DE EL CENTRO
ESTUDIO DE CALLEJONES

21

MARZO 1976

DIRECCIÓN: _____

CENSUS TRACT: _____

Buenas tardes soy _____, venimos de parte del
Departamento de Planeación de El Centro.

Estamos haciendo un estudio para encontrar como la gente se siente
acerca de los callejones en las areas residenciales.

Entrevistante: Indique si hay algun callejón en la vesindad.

SÍ _____ NO _____

1. Cuanto tiempo tiene viviendo en El Centro? _____
2. Cuanto tiempo tiene viviendo en este domicilio? _____
3. De lo siguientes, cual describiría sus sentimientos tocante a los
callejones?

A. Callejones son beneficiais para los dueños.

B. Callejones son detrimento para los dueños.

C. No tengo ninguna opinión.

4. Si usted fuera a comprar una nueva casa, lo preferiría con callejones?

SÍ _____ NO _____

Por favor explique brevemente. _____

Gracias por su cooperación.



PLANNING COMMISSION

February 23, 1976

Gentlemen:

The City of El Centro is currently reviewing its subdivision regulation pertaining to alleys. Currently, all new subdivisions are required to incorporate alleys in their subdivision plans however, the Planning Commission has the authority to waive this requirement if there is some justification for it.

We would very much appreciate hearing how this subject has been handled by your city or any other comments relevant to this matter. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

EL CENTRO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Oliver M. Alvarado
Planning Director

OMA:rp



PLANNING COMMISSION

February 23, 1976

Gentlemen:

Please be advised that the City of El Centro is considering amending the City Ordinance which requires the incorporation of alleys in all new subdivisions. This amendment, if approved, would delete the requirement of alleys in all new subdivisions and permit new subdivisions to be developed without alleys.

A study is currently being conducted to determine the overall ramifications this amendment may have on the community. Your comments are being solicited to better determine how this change may affect your agency. Please make all comments on attached form. Self addressed envelope is also enclosed for your convenience.

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

EL CENTRO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Oliver M. Alvarado
Planning Director

OMA:rp

Enclosure

FROM: CITY OF EL CENTRO PLANNING COMMISSION

Return Requested by: March 19, 1976

Please indicate what effect the elimination of alleys in all new subdivisions will have on your agency.

COMMENTS:

SUBMITTED BY _____ Telephone No. _____

TITLE _____ DATE _____

EXHIBIT E
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT-AGENCY'S

25

Dept. of Transportation
District 11, P.O. Box 81406
San Diego, Ca 92138

Pete McCurray
U.S. PostMaster
City of El Centro, CA 92243

Imperial County Planning Commission
940 Main Street
El Centro, CA 92243

Southern Calif. Gas Co.
940 North 4th P.O. Bin 620
El Centro, CA 92243

Imperial County Health Dept.
935 Broadway
El Centro, CA 92243

Attn: Faye Hamilton

Imperial Irrigation District
P.O. Box 1809
El Centro, CA 92243

Superintendent of Schools
of the El Centro District
640 State Street - P.O. Box 647
El Centro, CA

Attention: Dr. Richard H. Brautigam

Hospital Administrator
El Centro Community Hospital
1415 Ross Avenue
El Centro, CA 92243

Attention: Marvin Reed

Pacific Telephone Co.
P.O. Box 1887
El Centro, CA 92243

Imperial Valley Cable Co.
449 Broadway
El Centro, CA 92243

HAND OUT OR PLACE ON DESK

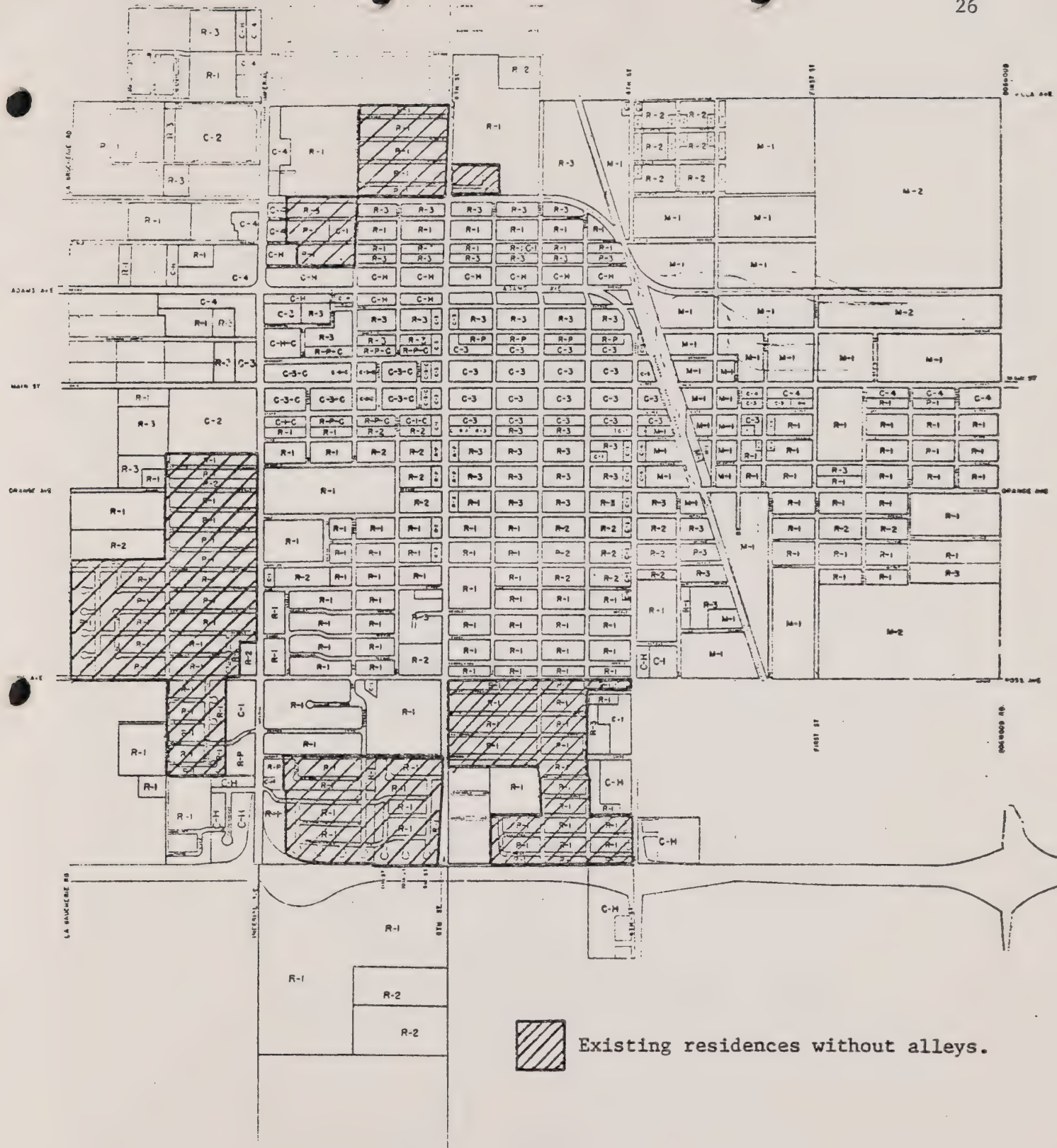
PUBLIC WORKS DEPT.
PLANNING COMMISSION
FIRE DEPT.
POLICE DEPT.

Water Quality Control Board
P.O. Drawer 1
Indio, CA 92201

Attention: A. Swajian

State Housing Division
308 No. 8th Street
El Centro, CA 92243

Attention: Norm Ward

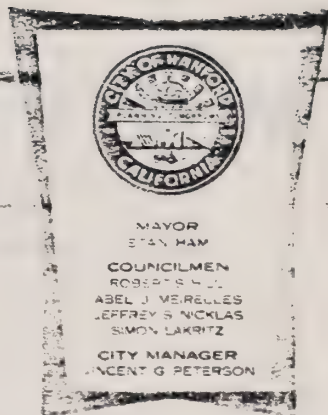


OFFICIAL ZONING MAP
CITY OF EL CENTRO, CALIFORNIA

Response From Cities

City of HANFORD

CITY HALL 400 NORTH DOUTY STREET (209) 582-2511
 CALIFORNIA 93230



February 26, 1976

Mr. Oliver M. Alvarado
 Planning Director
 P.O. Bin 1701
 El Centro, California 92243

RE: Alleys

Dear Mr. Alvarado:

Please find enclosed information which may be helpful to you concerning the value of alleys.

The City of Hanford generally discourage the use of alleys, especially in single family residential subdivisions. However, with multiple family developments, the private access drive to parking in the rear tends to be quite similar in design and use as alleys, except they are private, not public roads.

With commercial developments, we consider each plan on its own merits, as to whether alleys would be a benefit or detriment to all concerned.

If you have any further questions regarding this matter, feel free to contact our office.

Sincerely,

Jim Beath
 Jim Beath
 Planner II

JB:js
 encl.

The City of
BARSTOW
California

• Community Development

March 1, 1976

City of El Centro
P O Bin 1701
El Centro, CA 92243

Attention: Oliver M. Alvarado

Regarding: Alley's in Relationship to Subdivisions

Dear Mr. Alvarado:

In response to your letter dated February 23, 1976, this issue has not been brought up. If it were, staff would refer to Senate Bill #977, which is currently the determining factor for issues such as this.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the sections which apply to your question. We hope this information will be beneficial to you.

Sincerely,



Paul J. Parham
Director of Community Development

PJP:jj



PLANNING COMMISSION

February 23, 1976

City of Yuba
Planning Dept.
441 Colusa Ave.
Yuba, CA 95991

Gentlemen:

The City of El Centro is currently reviewing its subdivision regulation pertaining to alleys. Currently, all new subdivisions are required to incorporate alleys in their subdivision plans however, the Planning Commission has the authority to waive this requirement if there is some justification for it.

We would very much appreciate hearing how this subject has been handled by your city or any other comments relevant to this matter. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

EL CENTRO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Oliver M. Alvarado
Planning Director

OMA:rp

City subdivisions are not required to provide alleys within the City of Yuba City.

Planning Director



CITY OF ~~Indio~~ CALIFORNIA

100 CIVIC CENTER MALL • P. O. DRAWER 1788 • INDIO, CALIFORNIA 92201

Phone: (714) 347-2351

W. PHILLIP HAWES
CITY MANAGER

Department of Planning & Development
March 5, 1976

Oliver M. Alvarado
Planning Director
City of Elcentro
Post Office Bin 1701
El Centro, California 92253

Dear Mr. Alvarado:

The City of Indio does not require alleys and has not done so for over twelve years. We do have a couple of alleys related to new shopping centers or industrial parks that have been developed since 1968; however, the City did not require the alley but was agreeable to them. Alleys, as far as we are concerned, are not usually necessary for most development purposes; plus, (and more important) they create a substantial public expense and nuisance if they are improperly maintained.

This opinion reflects the City position; however, the question of requiring alleys occasionally comes up but we have never seriously considered adding the requirement to our regulations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. Northrup", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

William M. Northrup
Director of Planning & Development

CITY OF TULARE

411 EAST KERN AVENUE

TULARE, CALIFORNIA 93274

TELEPHONE (209) ~~688-XXXX~~

688-2001

February 27, 1976

CITY OF EL CENTRO
Planning Department
Post Office Bin 1701
El Centro, California 92243

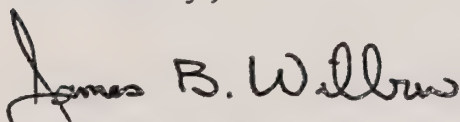
Attention: Oliver M. Alvarado
Planning Director

Dear Mr. Alvarado:

In response to your letter requesting information regarding Subdivision Regulations pertaining to Alleys, the City of Tulare does not allow alleys except when unusual circumstances arise. (See Section 8-6-4-B of attached Code). It has been the practice of the City of Tulare to discontinue alleys due to the maintenance and general clutter that they produce.

Should you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact this office at your convenience.

Sincerely,


James B. Wilbur
Planning Assistant

/pk

Enclosure:



CITY OF TURLOCK
CALIFORNIA 95380

March 8, 1976

Oliver M. Alvarado
City of El Centro
Planning Department
Post Office Bin 1701
El Centro, CA 92243

Re: Alley Questionnaire

Dear Mr. Alvarado:

About six years ago the City subdivision regulations were amended to prohibit alleys in low and medium density subdivisions.

The factors influencing our change were:

1. Mandatory undergrounding of utilities (adopted 1-1/2 years before alleys eliminated).
2. Requirement for two inches of A.C. for surface (adopted 1-1/2 years before alleys eliminated).
3. Consumption of land.
4. Theft and police problems, and fire.
5. Maintenance (weeds, debris, firewood).
6. The local FHA office reluctant to approve subdivisions with alleys.

Alleys can be authorized by the Commission when requested by the subdivider, or required to finish an existing alley.

When alleys are approved by the Commission the following conditions have been applied.

1. No part-width alleys are allowed, and the alleys within the subdivision must be self contained so as not to affect adjacent properties.
2. All other conditions above apply.

Page 2
March 8, 1976
O. Alvarado

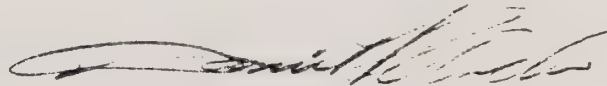
Each subdivision is required to submit a typical plot plan showing the garbage and trash enclosure. Our garbage company will not enter the property, and the City does not allow curb side pick up of garbage. So, in essence, each lot has an enclosed area with a gate to the outside for garbage collection.

This has worked effectively and eliminates garbage can "row" on collection days.

We have only had one subdivision with alleys since our ordinance was adopted.

I hope I've been of some help.

Very truly yours,



Daniel R. Avila
Planning Director

DRA:prs



1118 JEFFERSON STREET

DELANO, CALIFORNIA 93215 / (805) 725-0230

March 1, 1976

35

FRANK M. HERRERA
MAYOR

WARREN J. FOX

JOE HOCHSCHILD

HARRY T. HOFMAN

LEONARD T. VELASCO

COUNCILMEN

Mr. Oliver M. Alvarado
Planning Director
City of El Centro
El Centro, California



Dear Mr. Alvarado:

This is in response to your inquiry regarding alleys dated February 23, 1976.

The City of Delano does require alleys in R-1 Zoning Districts.

The ever increasing cost of housing construction has caused the staff to reevaluate this requirement.

We have not as yet brought any recommendation for changing this policy to the attention of the City Council. However, the elimination of the alley requirement may be a real possibility within the next few months.

Please send us a copy of the report of your alley survey when completed.

Sincerely,

Matthew Fouratt

Matthew Fouratt
Planning Director

MF:sd

Response From Agencies

FROM: CITY OF EL CENTRO PLANNING COMMISSION

Return Requested by: March 19, 1976

11-IMP-ECn

Please indicate what effect the elimination of alleys in all new subdivisions will have on your agency.

COMMENTS:

Elimination of alleys will have no effect on

State Highways.

Sincerely

Jacob Dekema

District Director of Transportation

SUBMITTED BY *J. Dekema*

District Land Use Coordinator

714
Telephone No. 294-5373

TITLE _____

DATE February 27, 1976

FROM: CITY OF EL CENTRO PLANNING COMMISSION

Return Requested by: March 19, 1976

Please indicate what effect the elimination of alleys in all new subdivisions will have on your agency.

COMMENTS:

If the City of El Centro amends the City Ordinance to

delete the requirement of alleys in all new subdivisions

and permit new subdivisions to be developed without alleys,

this will have no affect upon the hospital.

SUBMITTED BY Marvin E. Reed *MER* Telephone No. 352-7111
TITLE Administrator DATE 2-25-76

FROM: CITY OF EL CENTRO PLANNING COMMISSION

Return Requested by: March 19, 1976

Please indicate what effect the elimination of alleys in all new subdivisions will have on your agency.

COMMENTS:

Your letter stating that the City of El Centro is considering the elimination of the requirement for alleys in all new subdivisions has been referred to me by the Superintendent.

As far as the School District is concerned, this amendment would not have any adverse effect.

As a citizen I would comment that the elimination of alleys would probably be beneficial because this would eliminate the unsightly situation that we have in most of our alleys now. It would reduce the amount of maintenance work done by City crews to try to maintain them and would possibly reduce thefts by not providing access through backyards. In addition, it would provide the homeowner with more yard space.

SUBMITTED BY

Carl E. Moore

Telephone No. 352-5712

Carl E. Moore
Assistant Superintendent
Business Services

TITLE _____

DATE 2/26/76

FROM: CITY OF EL CENTRO PLANNING COMMISSION

Return Requested by: March 19, 1976

Please indicate what effect the elimination of alleys in all new subdivisions will have on your agency.

COMMENTS:

Our Regional Board does not feel that the proposed
amendment to the City Ordinance which requires the
incorporation of alleys in all new subdivisions will
have any impacts on water quality

SUBMITTED BY

Jerrold A. Bruns

(714)
Telephone No. 347-4011

JERROLD A. BRUNS

TITLE Environmental Specialist

DATE February 26, 1976

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Planning Department

FROM: W. L. GRAY, JR. - Chief of Police

SUBJECT: Elimination of Alleys in New Subdivisions

DATE: February 24, 1976

In response to your letter of the 17th, re: alleys in new subdivisions. The police department opposes the deletion of this requirement for the following reasons:

- a. No alleys would render security inspections of houses extremely difficult, particularly from the rear.
- b. Deletion of alleys would make apprehension of burglary (and other) suspects extremely difficult.
- c. Deletion of alleys would make C.O. 6487 (120 hour parking limit) more difficult to enforce. Recreational vehicles are becoming increasingly evident and parked on the street, are not only unsightly but also pose a traffic safety problem because of obstructed vision.
- d. No alleys results in the sanitation trucks being on the streets more, causing traffic obstruction.
- e. No alleys - unsightly streets. We believe the counter-argument of littered alleys to be a problem of enforcement, not properly solved by doing away with alleys. You don't kill the dog to get rid of the fleas.
- f. Fire watch: Police units catch a significant number of fires and sound the alarm early, impossible if no alleys are available.

In summary, the police department does not believe that the \$900.00 a lot savings is worth the significantly increased danger to life and property that we believe will result if the alley requirement is removed.

W. L. GRAY, JR.
CHIEF OF POLICE

Jim Townsel

By: Jim Townsel
Community Relations Officer
El Centro Police Department

JT:gj

FROM: CITY OF EL CENTRO PLANNING COMMISSION

Return Requested by: March 19, 1976

Please indicate what effect the elimination of alleys in all new subdivisions will have on your agency.

COMMENTS:

~~ELIMINATION OF ALLEYS HINDERS FIRE DEPARTMENT ACCESS TO THE REAR OF THE PROPERTY.~~

~~TIME DELAY IN EXTENSION OF HOSE LINES TO REACH THE INTERIOR OF A BUILDING, FROM THE REAR, OR TO REACH OUT-BUILDINGS ALONG THE BACK OF THE PROPERTY IS A HANDICAP.~~

~~TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE WHERE LIFE AND PROPERTY IS INVOLVED.~~

~~TO BE ABLE TO GAIN EASY ACCESS AND QUICKLY ATTACK THE FIRE FROM ANY AND ALL DIRECTIONS IS IMPORTANT IN REDUCING THE OVERALL LOSS TO THE BURNING PROPERTY, AS WELL AS REDUCE OR ELIMINATE PROPERTY DAMAGE TO THE ADJACENT EXPOSURES.~~

~~IF ALLEYS ARE INCLUDED IN YOUR PLAN, THEY SHOULD BE PAVED, CLEAN AND ACCESSABLE AT ALL TIMES.~~

SUBMITTED BY LESTER PATTON, FIRE CHIEF,
EL CENTRO FIRE DEPARTMENT

Telephone No. 352-5925

TITLE FIRE CHIEF

DATE 3-10-76

EL CENTRO, CALIF.

TEL 714 352-8770

IMPERIAL VALLEY CABLE Co.

44

BRAWLEY, CALIF.

TEL 714 344-3720

HOLTVILLE, CALIF.

TEL 714 352-8770

CENTRAL OFFICE

449 Broadway P.O. BOX 1945

EL CENTRO, CALIFORNIA 92243

CALEXICO, CALIF.

TEL 714 357-3337

March 5, 1976

Mr. Oliver M. Alvarado
Planning Director
City of El Centro Planning Commission
P. O. Box 1701
El Centro, California 92243

Gentlemen:

In response to your letter dated February 23, 1976, concerning the deletion of the requirement of alleys in all new subdivisions; It is the opinion of Imperial Valley Cable Company that this amendment would have a severe impact on both the financial aspect of installing Cable Television in new subdivision and maintaining our plant in the future.

If the alleys were eliminated, we would be compelled to install our cable system either within a property line easement along the rear of the properties or within an easement along the street side of the lots.

In the event the rear property line easement method was utilized any work that would have to be done on our plant would require the interruption of privacy of the home owner. This method would also make most of the easements inaccessible to our heavy equipment and machinery which would increase our labor cost in the event damaged or deteriorated lines had to be replaced in the future. As you may already know, another problem would result from the fact that from time to time our system may require maintenance late in the evening, and we would again have to inconvenience the property owner.

-1-



In the event the street side service method was utilized, the problems would also be numerous. Eventhough an easement would be obtained, we all know that home owner still resent the defacing of their front yards or breezeways, which would be temporarily necessary for the replacement or repair of damaged underground cables. Another potential problems would be the necessity of numerous lines having to cross under sidewalks and paved streets to service houses on the opposite side of the street.

The above comments are strictly our feelings on the subject and we realize the City will receive different points of view from different interest. We will attempt to co-operate with you in any way we can to arrive at what is best for the community.

Sincerely,



Gil Varela
General Manager
352-8770

FROM: CITY OF EL CENTRO PLANNING COMMISSION

Return Requested by: March 19, 1976

Please indicate what effect the elimination of alleys in all new subdivisions will have on your agency.

COMMENTS:

In most situations an alley is not the preferred location for the
installation of gas facilities. Therefore the elimination of alleys
in all new subdivisions should have no adverse effect on the
Southern California Gas Company.

SUBMITTED BY

La Rada

Telephone No. 781-6103

TITLE Distribution Planning Supervisor

DATE 3-8-76

THE PACIFIC TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY

Room 116, 763 State Street

El Centro, California - 92243

March 15, 1976

Oliver M. Alvarado
Planning Director
City of El Centro Planning Commission
P. O. Box 1701
El Centro, California - 92243

Gentlemen:

We have received your letter of February 23, 1976 concerning deletion of the requirement for alleys in new subdivisions, and we welcome the opportunity to participate in your study.

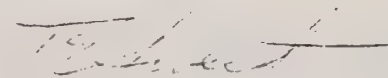
The absence of an alley in new tracts will have a definite impact upon Pacific Telephone's design of distribution facilities and joint trench planning. Our standard design would call for the placing of buried distribution cables and terminals within the public way along dedicated streets. Experience throughout the Bell System and Pacific Telephone has shown that rear-lot easements should be avoided whenever possible for maintenance and public relations reasons. Pacific Telephone policy is to locate in the street franchise area, jointly with as many utilities as practical.

Maintenance of buried facilities on rear-lot easements is difficult. Digging for fences and planting are common causes of cable damage. Replacement must be made by hand-digging through gardens, under fences and patios, creating added expense for us and inconvenience for the occupant. Public relations suffers where installers make frequent visits to above ground terminals, especially when the visit is for service to someone other than the property owner.

The front-of-lot design will have an impact, also. More telephone facilities will be placed in and across streets on encroachment permits. Location of utility structures behind the curb line will require increased emphasis on joint trench planning by utilities and builders. In addition, we must make property owners more aware of the limits of the dedicated right of way.

We recognize that land costs will ultimately mean the end of alleys, but we assure you that Pacific Telephone will work with all concerned to provide the best possible service to the community.

Sincerely,



T. E. Sweet
Engineering Manager

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Oliver Alvarado, Planning Director

FROM: Darryl Avrit, Director of Public Works

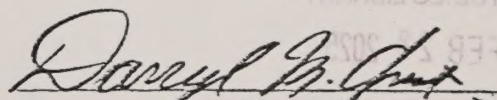
SUBJECT: Alleys

DATE: April 15, 1976

As per your request, the Department of Public Works, at this point in time, is involved only in maintaining the surface area of the alleys. We have 13.91 miles of unpaved alleys and 6 miles of paved alleys. The annual cost for the 13.91 miles of unpaved alleys is \$3,051.00 per year. This amounts to approximately \$219.00 per mile year maintenance cost. The 6 miles of paved alleys maintenance cost is \$9,712.00 per year. This amounts to \$1,620.00 per mile year maintenance cost. A total maintenance cost of approximately \$13,000.00 annually could well be spent on street maintenance.

It is the feeling of the Department of Public Works as our paved alleys increase so will the annual maintenance charge. The Department of Public Works strongly recommends that in the future city planning, alleys be eliminated from residential areas and those alleys placed in commercial areas be limited and scrutinized so that they do serve a very definite purpose.

The Department of Public Works at this time is not directly involved in trash cleanup. There is a considerable additional cost to the City tax payers in this particular program. I would feel as though the total cost concept of this should also be included in the report to the planning commission.


Director of Public Works

76 03069

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

